

Interview with Ambassador David J. Dunford

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR DAVID J. DUNFORD

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Q: This is an interview with Ambassador David Dunford, conducted by Elisabeth Raspolic in Tucson, Arizona, on March 30, 2006.

So Dave, if I may call you Dave.

DUNFORD: You may.

Q: I wonder could you tell us when and where you were born. Are you from Arizona?

DUNFORD: No, I was born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey; I have not been back there since. I lived in New Jersey until age six. I should introduce myself the way I introduce myself to one of my classes to show how people in the Arab world consider family to be so important. My father grew up in Seattle, Washington; his father was the bridge engineer in Seattle and the Dunfords originally came over from England to Canada and then on to Seattle. My grandmother was a Marshall. The three Marshall sisters came from Ireland and arrived in Seattle just the day before or the day after - the family is a little fuzzy on this - the great Seattle fire.

Q; Which was when?

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DUNFORD: June 6, 1889. My mother grew up in New Jersey; her father was a Jahn, and his father, my great-grandfather, was a musician who came from Dresden, Germany. He taught music in New Jersey. My grandmother was a Carmen. The Carmens came over on a boat sometime after the Mayflower - I am not sure how long after - from Scotland. So, I am one-fourth German, one-fourth English, one-fourth Irish and one-fourth Scotch.

Q: An admirable combination. So your family left New Jersey, then, when you were quite young, apparently.

DUNFORD: Six years old.

Q: So where did you go?

DUNFORD: We went to Norwalk, Connecticut. My father worked in New York City so it was a move from one bedroom community to another. When I was a junior in high school we moved up to Washington, Connecticut, about an hour further from New York. Washington was a little town. Probably the most exciting moment of my life was winning the Housatonic Valley League basketball championship.. We won 62 to 61 against the number one team in the state in our classification.

Q: What year was this?

DUNFORD: Nineteen-sixty.

Q: Oh, that is pretty impressive.

DUNFORD: It has been downhill ever since.

Q: Well, 1960, actually takes you into college. And you went where for your undergraduate work?

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DUNFORD: I went to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and I studied aeronautical engineering, at least my first three years there. I am better known at MIT for my athletic exploits than my academic ones. I switched majors in my junior year but my degree says I graduated in economics, politics and engineering. Economics snuck in because economics and political science shared the same department. I actually did political science and aeronautical engineering, an interesting combination. I also played baseball and soccer.

Q: In addition to basketball?

DUNFORD: I was not good enough to stay with basketball. I played freshman basketball. I had to choose and I was doing better in baseball and soccer. That was back in the days when you could play more than one sport; it does not seem to be possible anymore.

Q: Right, I guess not. These were also the days- I noticed that according to your resume you went on directly for graduate work at Stanford and this was during the somewhat tumultuous time in the '60s. How did that play out? Did the draft have a say in your going on to graduate school or not?

DUNFORD: Yes. I was not enthusiastic about being drafted and at that time graduate school provided an exemption. I believe the exemption went away just about the time I married, which again provided an exemption. When I joined the Foreign Service in June '66, there was some fellow in an obscure office who would write a letter to your draft board saying you had joined the Foreign Service and were assigned to wherever and would the draft board please cut this individual some slack. In my case, "wherever" was Ecuador and the draft board let me be although they did not have to.

Q: Yes, it is interesting, I was not aware of how the State Department was handling possible draftees at the time so I find that interesting. So your- What made you take the Foreign Service exam?

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DUNFORD: Well, I spent a year in graduate school which gave me a master's degree in political science. If you got into Stanford University and you spent a year there and passed all your courses and had a pulse you could get a master's degree. By the second year in the PhD program, I was frustrated by what Stanford's Political Science Department called its empirical approach. While I enjoyed mathematics and computers, I found it difficult to believe that political science would become a real science. I found I had no enthusiasm to pursue the PhD as I did not see myself as a professor of political science. I began looking for something else to do.

Let me back up a step. While at MIT, I stumbled across a program called the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE). Since I was still technically an engineering student, I applied for an engineering traineeship in Spain. I ended up at the National Institute of Aerospace Technology (Instituto Nacional de Tecnica Aeroespacial). Although I did almost no technical work, I was fascinated by the culture, enjoyed learning some Spanish, and enjoyed travel.

Q: You were in Madrid?

DUNFORD: I was in Madrid, living in the University City.

Q: For how long?

DUNFORD: It was only about six weeks. Then I spent another six weeks wandering around Europe, getting to know it. The summer as a whole hooked me on foreign travel and dealing with foreign cultures. While at Stanford, I applied to all sorts of organizations that could get me back into that world including the Peace Corps, the CIA, and the Foreign Service. I passed the written Foreign Service exam and I took the oral exam, probably, in November 1965. Then the oral exam was simpler, just three Foreign Service officers who tried to see how you did under stress. I remember the most stressful thing was the water pitcher on my desk. It appeared to have 12 or 13 moving parts so I decided not to try to

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risk a drink of water. I still believe that was the right strategy. They told me afterwards that I had passed but that I needed to know more about American culture. They suggested I read the back pages of either Time or Newsweek. To this day, if I read Time or Newsweek, which is rarely, I read it from back to front.

Q: Before you took the Foreign Service exam, I noticed that you traveled in Japan and Korea. You had a volunteer project. Was that before or after you took the Foreign Service exam?

DUNFORD: I think that would have been after. I believe I took the written exam in the spring of 1965. I probably applied for the Korea program before I took it but actually did the program after the written exam. Korea was an interesting experience as Korea was quite different from Spain. Spain was almost third world in those days but Korea was definitely third world. Our job in Korea was manual labor, digging a foundation with fairly primitive equipment.

Q: In Seoul?

DUNFORD: In Seoul. We dug the foundation for what was to become a student center. I got dysentery and got homesick but the experience did not totally wipe out my enthusiasm for a Foreign Service career.

Q: Was that group a faith based group or-?

DUNFORD: It was called the World University Service and I think it had some church support but I do not remember. There was no pressure on us to worship or anything like that.

Q: So you came to the Foreign Service with bits and pieces of overseas experience and as you say, a taste of it.

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DUNFORD: I did.

Q: How did you- what happened with the A100 class? When you surfaced in A100, was it a huge class or small?

DUNFORD: It was huge. The end of the fiscal year was June 30 in those days and the Foreign Service had a lot of money left over. Our class picture became two pictures because we were more than 100 and could not fit in one picture.

Q: Dear Lord.

DUNFORD: I remember four of my classmates very well because we all carpooled together from Northern Virginia. One was Arnie Raphel, whom you may have heard of.

Q: Indeed.

DUNFORD: Jim Creagan, who ended up as ambassador in Honduras, was another.

Q: Yes, I have met him somewhere along the way.

DUNFORD: Bob Carr and Dick Faulk, both of whom, I believe, rose to be deputy assistant secretaries in the administrative area, were the other two members of the carpool.

Q: It is an illustrious group.

DUNFORD: We were a tight-knit group and we kept well in touch. I am still in touch with Bob Carr and Jim Creagan and I have talked to Dick on the phone since he retired.

Q: Looking back did many of your A100 people become ambassadors over the years?

DUNFORD: Three of the five in our carpool. There were several others as well. David Passage comes to mind.

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Q: At that time, how did you- how were the selections made for your initial assignments? Were you able to bid or did they just come in and tell you where you were going?

DUNFORD: We bid in general terms. I asked for Latin America because I had a smattering of Spanish and thought that region made sense. Other people asked for different geographic areas. We had an assembly at the end of our six weeks in the A100 course. Assignments were announced and I learned that I was going to Quito, Ecuador. We had a pool to be won by those who got the best and worst assignments, as determined by a class consensus. I was out of the running for either. I recall that Mogadishu and Vietnam were in the running for the worst. That was about a year before almost all entering FSOs had to go to Vietnam. One of our classmates, Stephen Haukness, was assigned to Vietnam and was killed there.

I went home brimming with the news that we were going to Quito and my wife greeted me at the door, telling me we were going to Quito. She guessed. She had found a map of Latin America and looked for the capital she knew the least about. Quite amazing!

Q: Did you have a family then, did you have children then?

DUNFORD: My wife Sandy but no children at this time. I met Sandy in California; I was going to Stanford and she was, at that time, working in a bookstore and my next door neighbor in an apartment complex.

Q: What was your assignment for your first tour?

DUNFORD: In those days they had rotational slots for junior officers. I went to Quito on a cruise ship, another thing you cannot do anymore. We sailed from New York, stopped in Jamaica and Cartagena, went through the Panama Canal, and stopped in Buenaventura, Colombia. Buenaventura at that time was the poorest place I had ever seen, despite its name. We disembarked in Guayaquil. We took a dog, a golden retriever puppy, with us on the ship. As we marched off the gangplank in Guayaquil, the dog began to bleed just

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before it was time for an Ecuadorean vet to examine him. We were mortified. The vet looked him in the mouth and smiling up at us, he said: this dog “esta cambiando de dientes.” He was telling us that the dog was losing his baby teeth, puppy teeth, and not to worry.

Q: And so the dog survived?

DUNFORD: The dog survived, yes.

Q: So how did the rotations work out? Did you spend time in each section or just two or three sections or how did it go?

DUNFORD: I spent some time in all four of the major sections and, even though I left Quito three or four months early, I got quite a smattering of training. I began working for Mary Murphy, personnel officer. Her first task for me was to go through her files and make sure there was no classified material in them; that was a thrilling assignment. And it only got more exciting when I got to analyze Ecuador's social security law. At least it was in Spanish so it exercised my language skills.

Q: Still for her?

DUNFORD: Still for her. Then I moved to the budget and fiscal section, which proved to be a good thing because by April- I arrived at post in early January and by April I still had not been paid and it was getting to be a considerable strain. We were living off a State Department Federal Credit Union loan. I found out in the budget and fiscal section that there was a form that should have been sent in when I arrived at post. My first task in the section was to send in the form announcing my arrival at post so that I could be paid.

Q: You should have increased the amount, too.

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DUNFORD: Other than that I do not remember much about the budget and fiscal section except I worked for a guy named Jim Weiner who became quite a good friend.

Q: Did you work in the consular section?

DUNFORD: I did. In fact, looking back on my career, that was one of the most powerful positions I ever held. We were in Ecuador where virtually every Ecuadorean wanted to travel to the United States and he or she had to either go through me or my boss, who was also a junior officer. The actual Consul position was not filled. My boss, named J. Lamar Merk, taught me most of what I know about consular work.

Q: He was first tour also or was he second tour junior?

DUNFORD: I think he might have been a second tour officer. But he was a character and he was tough. His basic philosophy was the equivalent of having “no” on a sign around his neck. I began to appreciate that it was not a bad idea to be tough when I learned that down in Guayaquil the consular section had lines around the block waiting to get in. Subsequent investigation revealed that travel agents were allowed to wander through the consular section as well as some other questionable practices. In Quito, the lines were quite manageable because, unless you really had a good case to go to the United States, you did not.

Q: Did you do immigrant visas also?

DUNFORD: I did both, immigrant and non-immigrant. There were only two Americans in the section.

Q: And ACS? American Citizen Services?

DUNFORD: Yes, getting people out of jail. The case I remember the most, because I made a mistake, involved an American who was running around in the Hotel Quito naked

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and drunk. I was on call that night so I went over. He had calmed down a little bit so I worked out a deal with the hotel whereby he would not go to jail if I held his passport. J. Lamar made it clear the next morning that you do not take an American's passport for any reason. My solution did keep him out of the Quito jail, not a fun place in 1967 if ever.

Q: Were there many American citizens living in Ecuador at the time? I mean, what were they doing? Were they religious?

DUNFORD: We had some missionaries. We had some oil people - oil was not produced then but exploration was underway. We had some basic businesses, banks and that sort of thing. It was not a large American community but it was larger than in many countries.

Q: Well, where did you go after the consular section? What came next?

DUNFORD: I went to the political section. Bob Phillips was the political counselor and I worked with a guy named Fred Padula, who is still a good friend. He quit the Foreign Service after Quito and went to be a professor of Latin American history at the University of Maine. Dick Howard was also in the section. Fred and Dick were my mentors. I did some traveling around the Ecuadorean countryside with them and wrote some reports. It was my first real exposure to reporting.

Q: This was at the time when one still sent air grams, as I recall.

DUNFORD: Yes, there were still air grams and everything you did had to be typed on a manual typewriter and you would carat things in sometimes.

Q: It was the political section that got you out into the countryside a little bit, then?

DUNFORD: Yes but, back during my second month in Ecuador, I was sent down to the port of Salinas to deal with the arrest of six American tuna boats by the Ecuadorean Navy. This was a recurring problem and Salinas was in the Guayaquil consular district, but

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ConGen Guayaquil did not have enough people. The underlying issue was Ecuador's claim of a 200 mile territorial limit, which we did not recognize.

Q: You mean the international- territorial sea, waters?

DUNFORD: Sea, territorial sea. Several of our tuna boats got picked up by the Ecuadorean navy and brought into a port called Salinas. Sandy, my wife, and I went down to Salinas to hold the hands of the crews while we tried to negotiate their way out of port. I believe they had to pay a fine. It was not arduous work but it got me out of Quito. I thought it was an enlightened policy by embassy management to send a young guy like me out.

Q: You went out as a consular officer or as an economics officer?

DUNFORD: It was a consular role but I went out as just a Foreign Service officer who happened not have much better to do than sorting through the classified and unclassified in Mary Murphy's files.

Q: A wise move.

DUNFORD: I recall that I was still in the administrative section at the time.

Q: Did you have a chance to work in the economic section?

DUNFORD: I did and I decided, after that experience, that economics was my cone of choice. At the end of your first tour you had to make a decision on what cone you wanted to concentrate in.

Q: I was going to ask about that, when at that time that kicked in.

DUNFORD: My boss was Joel Biller. He was in his late 30s at that time, and he was a really good boss. He gave me a lot of responsibility, a lot of experience and guidance. My

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wife and I had some personal challenges at the time stillborn child and he and his wife were a big help getting us through them.

I thought of Joel as my role model and decided I wanted to be an economic officer like him.

Q: That is great.

DUNFORD: When it came time to think about my next assignment, I asked to go to Europe. I felt I had done my time in Latin America and wanted to have nothing to do with Asia or Africa or the Middle East in those days. My tour was not due to be over until Christmas but in late August or so I got a cable. It was very terse and it instructed me to proceed to Washington in early September to “Finnish” training. My first question to my colleagues was “finish what training?”

Q: With a capital “F”.

DUNFORD: Like all cables in those days the text was all capital letters. So I said, well, I had four months of Spanish before I went to Ecuador and I had spoken it every day in the consular section in particular. I thought my Spanish was already pretty good. Finally, somebody smarter than I pointed out that there were two “Ns” in Finnish and suggested that Helsinki was in my future.

Q: I see. So you had just asked for Europe in general without specifying any country?

DUNFORD: Yes. And they assigned me to nine months, 44 weeks, of Finnish language training.

Q: I believe it is considered an enormously difficult language.

DUNFORD: It is. I have always enjoyed languages, maybe because I do not take them as an intellectual exercise; I just listen and repeat. Children learn languages pretty well. If you

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think like a child it works well. Finnish is strange, though. It has got 16 cases and singular and plural are different. Trying to think your way through it is hopeless; it is just a matter of putting in the miles of listening and talking.

Q: When you did the language training back at FSI, was FSI in Arlington at that point or was it in the garage of the high rise or was it-?

DUNFORD: When I came into the Foreign Service in June '66, FSI (Foreign Service Institute) was just about to move from the garage to the new FSI building. I am sure you are familiar with it; the one with the slow elevators.

Q: Exactly, yes.

DUNFORD: Our A100 class, I remember, started in the garage and moved to the new building. All of my Spanish language training was in the new building. Finnish language training was in that building as well. There were only three of us in the Finnish language class. One was John Owens who was going to Helsinki to head the political section. John met a Finnish woman there named Barbro who he later married.

Q: I know Barbro, I have met her.

DUNFORD: When I first met her she was actually a Finnish parliamentarian.

Q: Yes. She, I believe later became ambassador to Niger, I think.

DUNFORD: The third class member was from the Agency.

Q: At that time were there many language designated positions at the embassy in Helsinki or were you one of the very modest handful when you were at that?

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DUNFORD: There were not many. I think I was the only one in the economic-commercial side. John Owens's position was language designated and there was at least one other officer in the embassy who spoke Finnish quite fluently.

Q: Was it a large mission?

DUNFORD: No.

Q: Larger than Quito?

DUNFORD: Smaller

Q: Oh, that surprises me.

DUNFORD: To be frank, Finland was the least challenging of any post I served in.

Q: How so?

DUNFORD: The interesting work was pretty much done by the Agency because of our proximity to the Soviet Union. The ambassador, virtually all of the time I was there, was Val Peterson, a former governor of Nebraska.

Q: So you had a non-career ambassador.

DUNFORD: Non-career ambassador. The deputy chief of mission was Jimmy Lewis, who was a GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) expert. Lewis was about to retire and was not too energetic. The other senior officers were not all that energetic either. My sense, no doubt exaggerated, was that I was doing about half the work in the embassy without completely filling out a nine-to-five day. I did find it very interesting to work on the nuclear power sector in Finland. Finland had two Soviet-supplied nuclear power plants. A private Finnish consortium had been formed to build a third plant and the consortium was intent on getting the technology from the West. U.S. companies were actively competing.

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Q: The private consortium was all Finnish?

DUNFORD: Yes. It was called Teollisuuden Voima Oy (Industrial Power Company). I built good relationships with the Finnish nuclear power officials and learned a lot about the subject. Having a technical background gave me a leg up. Various U.S. suppliers were constantly visiting, trying to sell their wares. General Electric, Westinghouse and Combustion Engineering were the three U.S. companies bidding. A Swedish company eventually ended up winning the bid. It was nevertheless a very interesting experience for me.

I also did a lot of reporting on what the Finns were doing with the environment, an issue that was ahead of its time. I did a lengthy report on Finnish state owned companies. I mention that only because one of them was Nokia, which has since gone from an obscure state owned Finnish company to a fairly important world company.

Q: Yes indeed. Were you- in the structure of the embassy were you working directly with the DCM or were you one of many in the economic section? Or how was the-

DUNFORD: There were three of us doing economic-commercial work so I worked for both the economic counselor and the commercial attach#. Most of my work was economic work but there was some commercial work. I also was the backup consular officer. If the lone consular officer was traveling or sick I would spend part of the day in the consular section signing visas and handling issues.

Q: How was it having a non-career ambassador with a career DCM- I mean, how did that relationship work, or were you even aware of it at your level?

DUNFORD: I interacted quite a bit with Val Peterson. He was a very likeable guy. He had his issues; one was the Finnish media. He kept trying to reform the Finnish media which persisted in criticizing the United States, particularly over Vietnam, and was hardly ever critical of the Soviet Union. Finns in those days had a basic policy: they had lost every war

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with Russia, the Soviet Union, over the years and they were not going to lose another one. They were not going to have any foreign policy issues with the Soviets and in return the Soviets were supposed to keep their hands off Finnish society. As a result, the Finnish media did not criticize the Soviet Union but felt free to criticize the United States. Peterson thought that was totally unfair and constantly ranted and raved to the point where I think he was no longer welcome in certain offices.

Q: I was going to ask if he made any progress.

DUNFORD: No. He did not. His other interesting trait was to obsess about Embassy security long before it came into fashion. He had the windows coated with Mylar; he put up security cameras. When I left, there was talk of bringing in guards with dogs. The only security threat I know of was an occasional march against the Vietnam War, but the Finnish authorities always kept the marchers away from the embassies. Overall, Helsinki was one of the safer places I have been in my life.

Q: Did you have a Marine guard, security guard at the embassy?

DUNFORD: I do not believe we had Marine Security Guards.

Q: Interesting.

DUNFORD: I might be wrong. No, I do not believe we had Marines in Helsinki. I recall we had them in Ecuador. In Ecuador we did have security issues.

Q: How did you deal with the issue of Vietnam in the background while you were stationed in Western Europe where clearly Vietnam was not approved, our actions in Vietnam? I mean, you were there in Helsinki, I think probably you went right after TET (Tet Mau Than Offensive) and it was quite a ferocious time while you were in Helsinki. Did this enter into your- the way you conducted your business?

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DUNFORD: You know, because I was doing economic work and not really interacting on the political side at all I felt under no particular pressure on Vietnam. I did have a lot of Finnish acquaintances and occasionally they would try to stir me up on Vietnam; I just tried to avoid the subject if at all possible. My own views were that Vietnam was turning into a disaster. I probably held those views even before I joined the Foreign Service. I never felt, as some did in those days, that I needed, in order to maintain my personal integrity, to resign because I simply was not called on very often to defend our Vietnam policy. It became a little trickier later in life when I was in the Middle East.

Q: I can understand.

Did you have a chance when you were in Helsinki to travel in the region much?

DUNFORD: I did. Let me see, where did I go? First of all, Scandinavia has a high incidence of suicide and the reason appears to be that it is very dark, particularly early in the winter before the snow comes. So November is considered the worst month; actually in Finnish it means "death month."

Q: Oh my.

DUNFORD: Snow has not come yet so there is just nothing to reflect light. In December the snow might not have come yet but it is Christmastime and everybody is busy celebrating so it is okay.

My first November, we put our car on the ferry and went to Bremerhaven, Germany and drove around Europe. Sandy was quite pregnant and this pregnancy was successful; our child was born February 1970.

Q: In Helsinki?

DUNFORD: In Helsinki.

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Q: That is great.

DUNFORD: She gave birth at the Katiloopisto, which means “midwife's school.” Not a very reassuring name but it was very professional.

Q: Just lucky it went well.

DUNFORD: It did not go perfectly but it went alright.

So in November we drove as far south as Venice and Florence and back through Switzerland and Germany to Bremerhaven. So that was a good trip. The next spring I went to Poland for a week because a good friend of mine was assigned to Warsaw. I went by ship from Helsinki to Leningrad and back; just a long weekend. I also traveled to Stockholm once on official business. We had an inspection while I was in Helsinki and one of the inspectors recommended I learn how another Embassy functioned. So I set up a short visit to Embassy Stockholm. Both Sandy and I went to Moscow by train. Another friend from the A100 class was stationed in Moscow. He arranged for us to fly to Tbilisi and Sochi.

Q: That is quite far south. Did any of these travels-

DUNFORD: We also went two times to Greece on Aurinkomatkat (Sun Tours) charter flights. Traveling with a planeload of Finns can be pretty crazy because Finns do drink.

Q: Did any of these travels inspire you to do business in other places in Europe in future go arounds?

DUNFORD: Well, I knew my next assignment was Washington.

Q: Oh you did?

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DUNFORD: Washington was a given since my first two assignments were overseas. I was not really thinking much beyond Washington. I ended up staying in the U.S. for nine years.

Q: It is unusual.

DUNFORD: It was pretty good for the family in many ways but it was unusual; eight years was the limit. For the ninth year I got a dispensation from the Secretary of State to work at USTR (United States Trade Representative's Office).

Q: Right, right. I noticed from your postings that you had spent a chunk of time in Washington and I assumed that you had been up against the wall a _____.

DUNFORD: One other important thing about Finland before we leave. Well, two other things. My son was born in Finland. Right after my son was born I went with two Finns, the ambassador's driver and a friend of his, and Ed Howatt, our commercial attach#. We drove to Akaslompolo.

Q: When you get it back for review you can correct the spelling.

DUNFORD: Akaslompolo is right up above the Arctic Circle, and we skied cross country for ten days. We came back to the village each evening. It was a very memorable vacation. Of course, it was great for conditioning. But the problem was all they had to eat there was reindeer meat. It was pretty good the first day and not so bad the fourth day and I swore never to eat it again by the tenth day. The skiing was great; it was a very stark but very beautiful landscape.

Second and also important was that we adopted our daughter in Finland. When my son was born it became apparent my wife could not have any more children so we started looking immediately for adoption possibilities. An opportunity presented itself faster than we expected, because adoption is not a big thing in Finland. The agency, Pelastakaa The woman who interviewed us kind of nervously asked me, are you foresighted? I said

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foresighted? What do you mean? And she still looked kind of nervous so I said well, say it in Finnish. The word, while literally in Finnish it means “thinking ahead,” is better translated as “prejudiced.”

Q: Foresighted; how interesting.

DUNFORD: We said not that we knew of. She explained that the girl had a gypsy father. The word for gypsy in Finnish literally translates as black. Gypsies are often discriminated against in Scandinavia. We said we were delighted to have a half-gypsy daughter. She is now a high school teacher here in Tucson.

Q: That is wonderful.

DUNFORD: So both our children were born in Finland.

Q: So you came home a greatly expanded family. And she was perfectly healthy, I assume, and all that.

So you came back to State Department as an economist.

DUNFORD: Well, I applied for and received six months economic training.

Q: At FSI?

DUNFORD: At FSI, which was great because it is the equivalent, they said, of an undergraduate degree in economics. Even though my diploma said “economics” I took only one course in economics. I thrived in the FSI course; I worked hard, learned a lot of economics and the instruction was good. Some of the great things about the Foreign Service are the language and professional training.

After that, of course, I was expected to take an assignment that had economic content so I went into the Office of International Trade in EB. My job turned out to be to become the

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expert in the Department on the generalized system of tariff preferences (GSP). This was the period when the Trade Act of '73 was working its way through Congress.

Q: There is a new act.

DUNFORD: This was the legislation to authorize U.S. participation in the Tokyo round of trade negotiations. Title Five of that act introduced a system of tariff preferences, similar to what the rest of the developed world was offering. The thinking was that developing countries needed a leg up, tariff preferences that the legislation provided. There were ceilings on individual products and ceilings on how much a country could export and still get the preference, so it was a very complicated system.

Q: They could barter back and forth with each other's ceilings, could they not? Or am I confusing that with something else?

DUNFORD: No, at least not in my day.

Q: Okay. Were you dealing with the issue worldwide or did you have a regional responsibility?

DUNFORD: No, I had the issue pretty much worldwide, which got me working with the U.S. Trade Representatives Office. But they, because GSP was sort of the stepchild of the USTR, were much more interested in the trade negotiations coming up. They were delighted to have somebody in State take over that issue. As a result I got to do quite a bit of travel; I went to Brasilia, Guatemala, Paris and Geneva. I also did some UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) meetings in those days. A typical UNCTAD meeting was two weeks out of your life in Geneva although most of the real negotiating happened only early in the morning of the last day.

Q: I have not heard a reference to UNCTAD in a long time.

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DUNFORD: Which is probably a good thing for the rest of us.

Q: Probably.

What was it like coming home with a family and reestablishing life in the United States?
Where were you living?

DUNFORD: Well, when we first came back, the State Department had a deal with the Watergate. The Watergate had only that year, 1972, become famous. The deal was that the Watergate would rent you a room for whatever the State Department gave you for per diem.

Q: The hotel side, not the-

DUNFORD: The hotel side. So we stayed there for the first 30 days. My wife Sandy left me one day with the two children, who were then one-and-a-half and two. She went out to look for a house. After an all-day search, she called and told me to put the kids and myself in a cab and come to the real estate agent's office near Fairfax Circle.

Q: ...of a conversation with Ambassador David Dunford on March 30, 2006, tape two.

Okay, so you were in a cab going to Fairfax and Fairfax Villa you ended up in.

DUNFORD: We ended up buying a house in Fairfax Villa, close to George Mason.

Q: Close to George Mason which has recently become quite popular and familiar.

DUNFORD: My wife actually graduated from George Mason while we were back in Washington. She became a CPA and now mainly does taxes.

Q: Oh my, I think she is probably busy.

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DUNFORD: It is one of the reasons we wanted to stay so long in the U.S. This allowed her to finish her education and get her CPA credential. We paid an outrageous sum of money for the house, of course; it seemed outrageous at the time.

Q: At the time, I am sure.

DUNFORD: But while in Finland my salary had gone from \$6,600 a year to almost \$15,000 so I felt pretty rich.

Q: And you commuted then into work or did you carpool or were there other State people around you?

DUNFORD: Well, over the next nine years I carpooled some of the time and went alone other times or took the Metro, I think the Metro was starting to run by the end of that period. It was an arduous commute at times, sometimes an hour.

Q: Your kids then went to school in the Fairfax district?

DUNFORD: They did. And I actually got into coaching youth sports. I played baseball and soccer in college as well as freshman basketball; I ended up coaching all three sports for my son who was, at the time, about eight or nine. That was great fun but it also meant I had to leave work early a couple days a week, which my job in EB allowed me to get away with.

Q: I was going to say, in EB that was not the norm. I note that you went back to Stanford at some point in here to get another master's.

DUNFORD: Yes. They called that advanced economic training or university training.

Q: Oh, so that was State Department-

DUNFORD: The State Department paid for everything, a great deal.

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Q: Sure, sure.

DUNFORD: Going back to Stanford, I found myself much more focused, much more disciplined than I had been the first time around so it was a good year, both for the family and me. My wife's family is from California so she was able to reconnect. Our children enjoyed it.

Q: That is good.

DUNFORD: I enjoyed it although I broke my elbow playing basketball. I played basketball in Maples Pavilion every day at noon and got pretty good until the injury.

Q: Is Maples Pavilion part of the Stanford campus? I do not know.

DUNFORD: Yes, I am sorry.

Q: That is okay.

DUNFORD: It is where the Stanford basketball team plays. It is just about, I think, to be junked for a new arena. In 1975-6, it was pretty new. I leapt up in the air for a pass - I could leap in those days - and somebody ran under me. I came down on my elbow and shattered it. Fortunately, I was only two miles from Stanford Hospital where they had some of the best surgeons around. So they put my elbow back together and I walked around in a cast for awhile. I still cannot pronate my left arm very well.

Q: But it did not interfere with your studies at the time? You could continue?

DUNFORD: Well, not a lot.

Q: Other than the fact that it hurt.

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When you went to Stanford was- had you already been paneled for your next assignment? Did you know what you were going to do next?

DUNFORD: I went back to the Office of International Trade as Chief of the Trade Agreements division. The original division I worked for was the General Commercial Policy division. I cannot remember when I knew I had the new assignment. The new assignment was rough because the guy I replaced simply moved up a slot to office director, Director of the Office of International Trade. To be frank, he continued to do a lot of the job that he had done as division chief so it was a very frustrating assignment. EB was pretty much run by (EB Executive Director) Frances Wilson in those days. I do not even know if you-

Q: I have heard the name.

DUNFORD: She was a legend and she recruited like a good basketball coach. If you were not fiercely loyal to her and the bureau, you paid a heavy price. Anyway, she was good to me. She recognized, I think, that I was struggling in the Trade Agreements Division and she helped arrange for me to go over to direct a new unit called the Planning and Economic Analysis Staff. I ended up working for Bob Hormats. Hormats was brought over from the NSC (National Security Council) to be senior deputy in EB. Much of his job at the NSC had been to be staff director for the G7 annual meetings (now the G8). He brought that function with him to State. I had a lot of opportunity, working for Bob, to participate in preparation for those meetings. We in the staff also did a lot of speech writing for the seventh floor. We actually did some economic analysis. Many staff members were professional economists brought in from outside the Foreign Service.

Q: Who was undersecretary for economics when- Do you remember or was this one of the people you were writing speeches for?

DUNFORD: It is a good question. Richard N. Cooper was Undersecretary during most of my time as EB/PAS Director.

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Q: Well I do not know because that, to me that is Hormats but this is before he reached that level.

DUNFORD: Yes.

Q: But okay, it is not that important.

DUNFORD: It says something about how power was shared in those days. I think Jules Katz was the assistant secretary during these years. Jules Katz was a long-time civil servant who replaced Tom Enders.

Q: It could have been.

DUNFORD: And Richard Cooper was his undersecretary. I remember Cooper fairly well because I went to the IMF (International Monetary Fund)/ World Bank meetings with him in Belgrade in 1979. I guess he would have been undersecretary for at least part of the time I was in PAS.

Q: Going back to the trade agreements, the section where you ended up working for a guy who could not let go of his previous assignment or responsibilities, how do you deal with something like that? Did you find that was a common thread in the Foreign Service or is that just a peculiar situation due to personalities at the time?

DUNFORD: I think it is far too common. Just moving everybody up one slot can cause problems like mine. We are all different in terms of management style and if you really like to micro-manage, then it is going to make it rough for your subordinates. I am not quite sure how I was perceived by others but I perceived myself as one who was more than happy to delegate everything possible. I was also happy to take the credit but I had no problem letting other people do the work.

Q: As long as you can get away with it.

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DUNFORD: In my experience there was always enough work to go around; you did not have to do your subordinates' work.

Q: Well, as the chief of the trade agreements commission what kinds of trade agreements were you working on? What was coming across your desk? DUNFORD: The issue which occupied most of my time, as I recall, was the turkey parts and cognac issue. The EEC (European Economic Commission), then the name for the European Union, had (and still has) a Common Agricultural Policy. Part of this was a system called variable levies. We had become very efficient producers of turkeys and turkey parts and the variable levy was designed to be high enough to discourage the entry of turkey parts into the European market no matter how efficient we became. We complained to the GATT, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. When the EEC blew us off, we decided to retaliate. We concluded that one class of Americans who would not be hurt that badly by retaliation would be cognac drinkers, specifically French cognac drinkers. Our decision to raise the tariff on cognac set off a minor trade war. The issue required daily briefing papers and endless meetings. I cannot remember any progress but the issue definitely kept the division busy.

Q: Were these policy negotiations conducted only by State or in conjunction with the USTR (United States Trade Representative)?

DUNFORD: In conjunction with the USTR. This issue, unlike GSP, was very much a USTR issue. USTR managed it but the State Department had a big role.

Q: Who took the lead? Was it USTR?

DUNFORD: USTR as I recall took the lead but State Department had a lot of say in it, largely because the European Bureau had a great interest in minimizing the overall damage to U.S.-European relations. Few in the European Bureau wanted to dabble in the grisly details of turkey parts and cognac.

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Q: But it was not- it was a congenial relationship, presumably. It was not really a turf war kind of thing.

DUNFORD: No. I always had pretty good relationships with my USTR counterparts. Of course, I ended up working there for some time.

Q: That is right, so it must have been pretty advantageous.

But actually, you did not end up there quite yet.

DUNFORD: No.

Q: When you left the trade agreements division then what happened?

DUNFORD: I went to this Planning and Analysis Staff (PAS). PAS was a rather laidback office by State Department standards. We had plenty to do but deadlines tended to be pretty flexible. That allowed me to leave early twice a week to coach youth sports. I had a staff of about four officers and two secretaries. Two of the staff were not Foreign Service but professional economists recruited from outside the Department.. My deputy, Danny Leipsiger, was an economist recruited from the World Bank.

Q: These were civil service positions or were these Schedule C positions, coming in with-

DUNFORD: I believe they were civil service.

Q: Civil service, okay, they were not political appointees.

DUNFORD: Civil service but not political appointees. We produced a lot of good stuff. The office was relatively new and we put it on the map. Bob Hormats certainly helped in this regard by giving us fairly interesting things to do.

Q: This was during the Carter Administration?

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DUNFORD: Yes. For example, one of the issues we wrestled with was how much attention should be given UNCTAD and the Group of 77 on trade and economic issues. The answer after 1980 when Reagan came in was none but back in the Carter years, this was considered to be a fairly meaty question.

Q: Did you deal directly with many embassies overseas or just sort of broadcast general policy decisions or did you rely on certain embassies to conduct negotiations on behalf of the office at all?

DUNFORD: Not very much direct contact. When embassies had issues with GSP, say, or with other various trade issues we were working on, then we would respond to them directly. I recall that our mission to the EC, our mission in Brussels, certainly had to execute occasional instructions that we helped draft.

Q: How were issues in the developing world dealt with? I mean, did any developing nations have products that would have come under your scrutiny?

DUNFORD: Yes, indeed. I do not remember the details very well but I remember there was a constant dialogue with our embassy in Manila over trade issues. We in the Office of International Trade always felt that the embassies never paid enough attention to the trade issues and considered that political issues were more important. We were confident in EB that political issues were not more important. I remember William Sullivan, later ambassador in Tehran, was ambassador in Manila then. I recall enjoying some of his telegrams out of Manila which lambasted all of us in Washington for not understanding how important the political aspects of the U.S.-Philippines relationship were.

Q: Well, you went on to which office after planning and economic analysis?

DUNFORD: I went to the Office of Development Finance (EB/ODF), which was an interesting office with a lot of good people in it. For example, I first met Dick Jones in ODF.

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We subsequently worked together in Riyadh and he has gone on to be U.S. ambassador in several places, most recently Israel.

Q: I believe so, yes.

DUNFORD: Let me see. Alec Watson was my predecessor. Alex? Alec? He was a tall guy who later left the Foreign Service to run the Nature Conservancy. Shaun Donnelly worked for me in ODF. Sean later worked for me in Cairo. So we had a lot of good people. I was only in ODF for about seven months. I could not stay in ODF because of the eight year rule but it turned out that I could go to USTR and be granted an exemption. Whoever was in the senior personnel job at that time more or less drove that issue.

Q: I can see the memos going back and forth, yes.

DUNFORD: My wife and I had more or less made up our minds that we had to go overseas but we were not quite ready. I should tell you that during that period, '79-'80, I looked seriously at leaving the Foreign Service. I remember talking to Bethlehem Steel and to a bank in New York about the possibility of jobs.

Q: Why? Why were you-?

DUNFORD: And the CIA. I also talked to the overt side of the CIA.

Q: Why were you thinking of leaving?

DUNFORD: Because we were comfortable in the States and the Foreign Service, while fun at times, also provided a lot of frustrations. But the issue was more about uprooting the family. I had two kids in school and a wife with a job. I am sure it is the same thing a lot of people go through.

Q: I think it is even worse now but that is my own personal opinion.

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DUNFORD: Yes, I am sure it is worse. Now, I don't recall clearly what led me to abandon the idea of leaving the Foreign Service, but I remember that the USTR job was interesting. I think by the time I had taken the USTR job, the private sector opportunities had gone away. I really enjoyed working with USTR.

Q: You were there for the transition, from Carter to Reagan?

DUNFORD: I was. And from former governor of Florida Reubin Askew to Bill Brock.

Q: I do not know. I was thinking of the secretary went from Muskie to-

DUNFORD: Bill Brock was the incoming USTR and he and I did fine and Bob Hormats was the deputy USTR at that time. Since I had worked for Bob before, I was in good shape. I worked directly for John Ray, who was a Foreign Service officer who was not on detail like me but had actually gone over to USTR. John was very much of a delegator so it was a very happy relationship. I was a deputy assistant U.S. trade representative for Europe and Canada. There were lots of issues and lots of travel and it was a very satisfying time. I was in a new section so I did some hiring. It was a good feeling when 20 years later there was still somebody at USTR who I had hired.

Q: You were over in the building on 17th Street?

DUNFORD: I started at 18th and G and while I was with USTR we moved to the Winder Building, which is right across from the OEOP (Old Executive Office Building).

Q: Oh yes, yes, yes. That is the one I was thinking of. That is where it is now, I believe. It was the last time I looked for it.

DUNFORD: You would know that building anywhere because when you reach for the door handle it is about two feet lower than it is supposed to be.

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Q: I am sure it was the lowest bidder.

DUNFORD: But anyway, that was a nice building.

Q: Did you consider leaving the Department and taking a position in USTR? Or did you sort of sniff around and see whether you wanted to do that?

DUNFORD: You know, I do not remember very clearly. It must have crossed my mind. I must have somewhere in that period when it came time to make up my mind decided to stay with the Foreign Service.

Now, are we ready to transition to Cairo?

Q: Sure, whenever, yes.

DUNFORD: That was interesting because of course I had never been to the Middle East. In fact, during the '70s I remembering pronouncing to all that would listen that there were three things that I wanted to have nothing to do with: ice hockey, arms control and disarmament (when I was in Helsinki they had the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) talks where they talked about missile throw weights and stuff like that), and finally the Middle East peace process because it just seemed mired in so much detail and much of it counterintuitive.

When I started looking for assignments, I actually had an offer to be economic counselor in Brasilia, which I thought was great. The problem was my wife had no enthusiasm for Brasilia. She had not been; I had. How bad can a city with a million Brazilians be? So I was ready to go but she said isn't there anything else? So, I made a mistake, I went back to the Department and asked is there anything else? They said Cairo was open. It was a senior job and I guess they either did not have any senior bidders or they did not have enough senior bidders. Arnie Raphel was in NEA at the time. When I mentioned Cairo to him, he practically frog marched me into the NEA front office where two deputy assistant

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secretaries sat down and talked to me that day. I told my wife about the possibility of Cairo and she said when can we go? Sandy went to high school in Tehran so she had a feel for the Middle East that I did not. Her father was an oil company executive, oil economist for the Western consortium that ran Iran's oil fields in the '60s and '70s. So we went to Cairo. We had two children and two dogs, so moving to Cairo was more than a little complicated.

Q: Was your wife planning to work there?

DUNFORD: She needed to finish her CPA practice. You have to do two years of practice to get your credential and she had only done about one year and nine months. She agreed to go anyway but we tried ahead of time to hook her up with one of the then Big 8 accounting firms, Peat, Marwick, International. Sandy immediately took to Cairo. She loved it. She would drive downtown and, when there were no parking spaces, park in the middle of the street and lock the car and drive people crazy. She actually finished her CPA requirements and ended up working for USAID (Agency for International Development) in the controller's office. She later went to work for the Library of Congress. She did accounting for the Library of Congress which had a book buying office in Cairo. So she kept pretty busy.

Q: No, that is great because as you know it is always a problem for spouses to find employment in their field and this seems to have been a very successful instance of that.

Well, what was it like being economic counselor and minister in-

DUNFORD: Minister Counselor.

Q: Minister Counselor, there you are, in Cairo?

DUNFORD: With the help of Bob Hormats I made the case for the more exalted title. My thought was that it would help me stand up to the aid director. The Economic Section in Cairo was not big but we had some superb people. Shaun Donnelly, who worked for me in

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ODF, agreed to come work for me for two years. Mary Gin Kennedy was already assigned to the section.

Q: Oh, Mary Gin.

DUNFORD: Mary Gin was just a dynamo. And Shaun, as you probably know, is very, very bright. Liz McKune who later became my deputy chief of mission (DCM) in Oman was in the section.

Q: I know the name, I do believe I have ever met her.

DUNFORD: She went on to be ambassador in Qatar. We were essentially a section of four. We did a lot of good work and Egypt was huge in terms of U.S. economic interests because we had a very large USAID program.

Q: The largest one in the world, was it not?

DUNFORD: The largest one in the world. The challenge was basically going toe to toe with the AID director who was obviously the most senior AID director anywhere in the world. Initially, Don Brown was the director, someone I had great respect for. I think Don finally came around to have some respect for me, which was not easy. Roy Atherton was our ambassador and Henry Precht was the DCM. Henry was, I believe, Iran country director when Iran fell. As a result of that, he was unlikely to be confirmed as ambassador so DCM in Cairo was about as far as he could go.

Q: Well this was several years later, actually.

DUNFORD: Sure.

Q: I mean, this was literally one year after the hostages.

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DUNFORD: Henry was terrific, a tireless worker; Roy Atherton was a great ambassador. He knew how to work a room in 20 minutes and make people remember that they had talked to him for most of the 20 minutes; he was just a master. And of course they were interesting times. The first week I was in Cairo, the Israelis took out the Osirak reactor in Iraq.

Q: You were there a week when this happened?

DUNFORD: Not even a week. I got there about June 6 and I think it happened on the 7th. And of course on October 6, 1981 Sadat was assassinated. I was in my home in Maadi and we got a phone call that we should all come to the embassy.

Q: The entire family or-?

DUNFORD: No, just me, just the country team. Roy Atherton was at the military parade where Sadat was assassinated and the defense attach# was there with him. I do not recall if any others from the Embassy were there. I drove into Cairo and tried to figure out what was happening. I remember driving the relatively empty streets of Cairo wondering whether the assassination of the president was going to lead to anything else. It was several hours before we realized that Sadat had died; initial reports from Abu-Ghazallah, who was the defense minister, were that he had been taken to the hospital and he was okay.

Q: Was the ambassador back at the embassy when you were meeting there or was he still-?

DUNFORD: He got back there as we were meeting. I believe he had some security.

Q: I am sure he did.

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DUNFORD: So they got him out and got him back to the embassy. There were people killed other than Sadat, including the Omani military chief of staff. Others on the stand were badly wounded.

Q: The assassin was killed or picked up right then and there or was there a chase that ensued or how did this play out? I do not quite remember.

DUNFORD: I believe he was captured on the scene because he had just jumped off a military vehicle. I think there might have been more than one assassin. They came and just sprayed machine gun fire at Sadat. (Now President Hosni) Mubarak was sitting right next to him but was wounded only in the thumb. The first time I met Mubarak, he still had a bandage on his thumb.

I had a chance to meet Sadat a month earlier. I went with Don Brown, the AID director and the ambassador as the note taker. Peter McPherson was then the AID Administrator; his visit was the occasion for meeting with Sadat and it happened in Alexandria. Sadat was a very interesting man. He was like a Shakespearean actor in some ways, greeting the ambassador as "Roy" in a booming voice. When he was talking politics he was very animated and very eloquent. When it was time to talk economics with the AID administrator, his demeanor was much more restrained. Economics did not interest him a whole lot.

Q: _____ counselor.

DUNFORD: Well, I just went as the note taker. But I am delighted I had a chance to meet him. Sadat was so popular in the United States and so unpopular in Egypt. I remember seeing him on Egyptian television, in Arabic, giving a seemingly endless speech and sweating because I am sure the air conditioning was not working well.

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Q: Well Mrs. Sadat certainly became a personality in her own right. I guess the focus was more on her, certainly after her husband's death, but she was quite close with Rosalynn Carter, I believe, and ended up on the faculty at AU, American University.

DUNFORD: Again, while she was very popular in the United States, the fact that she was so prominent in Egypt was considered an affront by many.

Q: Oh, this was not the appropriate role for the wife of a-

DUNFORD: I think she - I am trying to remember - she received her graduate degree or she defended her dissertation and it was televised in Egypt. This was not considered right by the Islamic types who, in those days, were not as prominent as they became.

Q: I was going to ask was there a very common or well known fundamentalist subsection of the society.

DUNFORD: I was so new to the region, and so focused on learning the economic side, that I did not pay enough attention in those days. But I recall that the run up to Sadat's assassination included a lot of fighting between Copts and Muslims and Sadat rounded up-

Q: Cops and Muslims?

DUNFORD: Copts, Coptic Christians.

Q: Oh, oh thank you. I thought cops.

DUNFORD: Yes, Copts, C-O-P-T-S, Coptic Christians.

Q: Okay.

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DUNFORD: Sadat rounded up 1,500 Muslim leaders or agitators or whatever he called them, and a number of the Copts as well, including Coptic pope, Shenouda. All were stuck in prison I guess for at least a cooling off period and one of the 1,500 was the brother of the assassin. So there clearly was a lot of sectarian strife in Egypt.

Q: What about the role of women at the time? I mean, was it difficult for your wife, for example, to work, although I must say she was working for the United States Government so it would not be that difficult . DUNFORD: Egypt was a much more relaxed place than it became so there were very few women who wore the hegab, the headscarf. Almost none completely veiled, although maybe some visiting Saudi women were veiled. Egypt was, at least on the surface, a very secular society. Western woman did not walk around in halter tops or anything like that. They dressed modestly but there was no veiling or scarfing or anything like that unless you went into a mosque.

Q: Did Cairo merit its reputation of having all the Gulf, well princes or what have you, the senior personnel, the Gulf coming to Cairo and letting their defenses go down, they were sitting around in the Hilton bar drinking or whatever, things they would not do at home, or could not do.

DUNFORD: I am sure there was some of that but it certainly did not-

Q: I have always heard of this so I was-

DUNFORD: -cross my screen. There is a lot of that in Morocco and Lebanon and Cairo to a certain extent. When I went back to Cairo in '97 it was quite evident, a lot of Gulf Arabs came there to let their hair down.

Cairo was a dirty, dusty, noisy place and I did not adjust instantly to it. It took me about six months before I finally began to enjoy the place.

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Q: What was the American community like? Your children were in the American school out in Ma'adi?

DUNFORD: Yes.

Q: It was quite a good school as I-

DUNFORD: Very good school! CAC, Cairo American College, was about half American, half other nationalities, including some Egyptians, and good facilities. The American school tended to be the center of the American community especially for those of us with children. I am sure there were other Americans who did not pay any attention to it at all. We made a lot of friends there, some of which we still have today. We had a wonderful house; so nice that it has been turned into the American Embassy Club now in Cairo. Because we had the largest yard outside the ambassador's, we agreed the Embassy could build an embassy tennis court on the property. That was fine with me since I played tennis.

Q: You were there, did your assignment coincide exactly with Ambassador Atherton's or were you there for another ambassador, Ambassador Veliotis, I believe?

DUNFORD: Yes, Nick Veliotis came a year before I left, maybe a little less than a year before I left.

Q: Was there a noticeable difference in style or emphasis?

DUNFORD: Yes. But both were very classy people. Nick liked to play a lot of tennis. I remember shortly after he arrived, he called up and wanted to use the tennis court. I had to tell him there was a sign up system. I did not know if the tennis court was available; it was not my job to know whether it was available or not.

Q: Did he recover?

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DUNFORD: He did.

Q: Your career did not go up in flames?

DUNFORD: Well, it goes back a little before that. When he was still assistant secretary of state he came out with Al Haig, who was then secretary of state, and they wanted to play tennis. So Henry Precht, the DCM, recruited me and the station chief at the time to play tennis with our distinguished visitors. Well, Al Haig had a weak backhand so we just worked his backhand and beat them three straight sets. The third set actually made them late for Haig's meeting with the foreign minister. But Nick Veliotis was very competitive and he did not forget. One of the first things he did when he got to Cairo as ambassador was to schedule a doubles match with me and the station chief. He found a different and more skilled partner and beat us fairly convincingly. After that Nick was pretty relaxed about our relationship.

Q: Was this Haig's first trip to the region? Or probably not now that I think about it, because I think he went out when Atherton was still there.

DUNFORD: Yes, Atherton was the ambassador at this time because Nick Veliotis came out as the assistant secretary.

Q: Oh, yes, as assistant secretary. Well, that may have been his first-

DUNFORD: Kamal Hassan Ali was the Egyptian foreign minister so it was probably late '81, early '82; I am not sure.

Q: So you stayed in Cairo how many years?

DUNFORD: Three years.

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Q: So a normal tour. Did you, at the end of three years and your first assignment in the Middle East think this might go on to other things or was this a flash in the pan kind of assignment?

DUNFORD: When I first went there I was skeptical but after I was there a while, I kind of liked the Middle East. I should tell you the moment that I decided I liked the Middle East.

Q: Oh yes.

DUNFORD: A guy named Niazi Mustafa, a very prominent businessman, invited us out to his farm and it was a fairly long drive through the countryside. As often happens, we stayed too late. Niazi encouraged us to stay later than we should have and we had to drive back in the dark. And driving in Egypt can be pretty tense at any moment but in the dark it is really messy because the roads are just filled with people and goats and chickens and water buffalos (gamusas) and-

Q: And no lights.

DUNFORD: No lights. So I am driving back and I am tired and we finally get to Cairo and we go across the bridge to the far side of the Nile because we lived on the east bank and we were coming from the west. I needed to get into the right hand lane to turn south to go to Maadi, the suburb where we lived. This pickup truck drove over the sidewalk to take the space I was trying to get into and I just started to curse, in English, and shook my fist at the guy. He looked over, somewhat bemused, at me and finally he tipped his baseball cap and gave me a big smile. I started to laugh and I never had a problem in Cairo after that. This was my introduction to the concept of ma'alesh. It is more an idea than a word and there is no easy translation. It is the recognition that, in the greater scheme of things, the annoying thing that just happened is really insignificant.

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Q: Which brings me to another question; how was your Arabic? And did the Department see fit to see fit to send you to Arabic training or how did that-?

DUNFORD: I had no Arabic, had never been to the Arab world, and was given no Arabic training. The Department taught me Spanish and Finnish and I guess that fulfilled their obligation. I was working for USTR up until the Friday before I left Washington and there was really no opportunity for language training. When I got to Cairo I scheduled an hour a day in the Embassy language program and continued to learn along the way.

Q: Well, Arabic in Foreign Service terms is a two-year training program in itself.

DUNFORD: While my Arabic has never gotten fluent, by the time I left Oman in 1995, I was able to give my farewell speech to the diplomatic corps in Arabic. Of course, I worked very hard on it with a language instructor but I was able to read from a page in Arabic which I thought was good.

Q: That is pretty impressive.

DUNFORD: But it was hard work and I often felt the lack of the language. I mean, in most cases you were dealing with people who would speak English, but having spoken Spanish in Ecuador and Finnish in Finland I felt a little naked sometimes.

Q: Was there anyone in the economic section who had an LDP position, a language designated position? Or they just did not spread them that far?

DUNFORD: I do not think so. I think all of the Arabic speakers were in the political side. Shaun certainly did not. Shaun was replaced by a guy named Bruce Duncombe. Bruce was a great economist but I do not believe he spoke Arabic. Liz had some. Her husband Ken was an Arabist. I do not think Mary Gin had much Arabic.

Q: Was Ryan Crocker the political counselor at the time?

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DUNFORD: No. Tom Carolan was the political counselor. Mark Hambley, a great Arabist, was there. Edmund Hull was there.

Q: He came before Ryan or after Ryan? It must have been after.

DUNFORD: I remember that Ryan was in Lebanon during that period. I do not remember him being in Cairo. Well, he must have been in Cairo at some point but not with me. I only met him later.

Q: You went from Cairo to senior seminar. Was that something you had hoped for or did this come-

DUNFORD: Oh, there was an assignment in between.

Q: Oh, there was?

DUNFORD: The- maybe I left it off.

Q: There it is, I am sorry, I am...

...interviewing Ambassador David Dunford in his office. The date is December 4, 2007.

DUNFORD: December 5.

Q: Oh, it is December 5 already; how time flies. And this is a continuation of the oral history project interview.

So, Ambassador Dunford, I think when last heard from we were talking about you being transferred to the Office of Egyptian Affairs as director in the Department of State. Do you want to talk about some of the events? It was a rather tumultuous time, as I recall, so perhaps you could talk about some of the events that took place.

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DUNFORD: It was busy. As I recall each day was full. This was for me a transition from being an economic-commercial officer to what we call a program direction; it was my first chance to really get into issues outside the economic realm. I had good training before I left Cairo from Henry Precht, my DCM, as well as two excellent ambassadors in Cairo, Roy Atherton and Nick Veliotis. I remember I traveled to Jordan, the West Bank and Israel at Department expense to orient myself to the issues.

Q: Before you went back to Washington?

DUNFORD: Before I went back to Washington; this was very useful. The first day on the job - I had some leave in the States - we learned that Libya had mined the Red Sea and the Egyptians asked for help, military assistance, in demining the Red Sea off their coast. I can remember being in the office until about 9:00 at night the first day. This came as a rude shock to my wife. I had two children in high school, and the rules were that I had to be home by 7:30 in the evening. I could get away with 7:40; any minute after that I was in deep trouble. It was hard to get away from the department because people stayed late as a habit even when there was no necessity.

Q: Oh, it is- I think you are quite right. It is a prime example of the difficulties of senior management people in the department who would also like to have a family life and the two do not blend very easily; it is very difficult. I admire you if you could try and get home by 7:30 or: 40.

DUNFORD: Well, my wife made it clear.

Q: So you did succeed, Defense came in and helped with the demining?

DUNFORD: Yes. I remember that first day was kind of a crisis but then the U.S. Government agreed to help and I do not remember hearing too much about it after that.

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The first year was quieter than the second year. The first year there were a lot of economic issues, getting a \$500 million supplemental through Congress which required a lot of hard work on justifying Egypt's economic needs and economic policies. The first year was also interesting because there was a shift in Egyptian ambassadors. Ashraf Ghorbal, who had been Egyptian ambassador in Washington since biblical days, finally retired. Abdel Raouf al-Ridi succeeded him. There were endless farewell parties and endless meetings to introduce the new ambassador around town. I kept busy just attending the meetings in the State Department. Each meeting in the State Department, of course, required a briefing paper.

Q: Sure. And the Egyptian account, it really at any time during the past umpteen years has been a very serious account so.

DUNFORD: It was a very interesting time. The Office of Egyptian Affairs was made up of five people working solely on Egypt. We had a deputy director who was also the peace process officer, a political military officer, an economic officer, and a junior officer who did all the consular stuff and anything else that needed to be done. It was a good office in a good bureau. NEA at the time was probably at its peak influence. Dick Murphy was the assistant secretary and Arnie Raphel was the senior deputy. Bob Pelletreau was my boss initially, followed after a year by Rocky Suddarth.

Q: Quite a good group.

DUNFORD: Adjusting to the transition between bosses was a little rough but we managed.

David Greenlee was my first deputy and Dan Kurtzer, who went on to be ambassador to Egypt and Israel, succeeded David during my third year in the office.

The second year we had crisis after crisis. I spent as much time in the Op Center, the crisis task force room, as I did in my own office. We had the hijacking of TWA 847. I remember being on the task force the evening that they killed Robert Stethem, the Navy

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Seal, and threw his body out on the tarmac at Beirut Airport. The hijackers also led away all the passengers with American passports and Jewish sounding names. That was pretty scary. That crisis went on for about a month, I think.

Then that was followed by-

Q: Was that crisis handled by your office only? Was the NSC involved? Were other players in there?

DUNFORD: There definitely were other players. The State Department set up the task force. State Department task forces were a lot more robust and powerful in the '80s than they are today. I participated in 2003 in the Iraq task force and we did little besides monitoring the news and writing sitreps (situation reports) for the Op Center.

Q: But 20 years before-?

DUNFORD: 20 years before the secretary would call the task force director and undersecretaries would come in frequently so we really felt like we were part of the action.

The second task force was set up by NEA to manage the hijacking of the Achille Lauro (an Italian cruise ship). I was part of the task force. Virtually everybody in NEA pitched in, taking shifts. The Achille Lauro was hijacked off the coast of Egypt. The hijackers rolled Leon Klinghoffer in his wheelchair off the deck.

Q: That is alright because I am afraid that something will. So they rolled his wheelchair off.

DUNFORD: They rolled his wheelchair off the deck. The hijackers were let off on Egyptian soil. The Egyptians tried to smuggle them off to Tunis where PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) headquarters were located. Ollie North, then in the White House, masterminded the operation to intercept the aircraft and force it to land in Italy. This was

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very embarrassing to the Egyptian Government and led to a major crisis in Egyptian-U.S. relations.

Q: What was their thinking in trying to get these people to the PLO, just sort of to get them off the Egyptian radar or they did not want to be responsible for a trial or any of that?

DUNFORD: The whole peace treaty with Israel was difficult for the Egyptians; it was not terribly popular among the Egyptian population. The other Arab countries ostracized Egypt. In 1984 the Jordanians had restored relations with Egypt but Egypt still did not have good relations with the Arab world and to be seen helping the Americans round up PLO hijackers would have embarrassing to the Egyptian government. They wanted to make the issue go away by turning them over to the PLO. The Egyptian line was that they were turning them over for trial by the PLO themselves, but of course that was not satisfactory to our government. John Whitehead, who was then deputy secretary, made a visit to Egypt to try to patch up the relationship. Congress was outraged at Egypt's behavior so our office had quite a bit of clean up to do.

That same fall terrorists, Palestinians (representing Abu Nidal), hijacked an Egypt Air airplane and landed in Malta.

Q: From where? From Cairo?

DUNFORD: The plane was on its way to Cairo. The pilot was running out of fuel and had no choice but to land in Malta with the hijackers in control. A new crisis task force was established. Bob Oakley, then counterterrorism ambassador (S/CT) and I ran that task force. The crisis did not end well. The Egyptians sent a military unit to Malta which stormed the plane. When the smoke cleared, a number of passengers were killed along with most of the hijackers.

Q: I am sure it did not do much for the Egyptian-Maltese relations either.

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DUNFORD: Perhaps not. I do not remember worrying much about that.

Q: Yes.

DUNFORD: The following year, 1986, one of the big events was a riot by Egyptian police that led two or three days of total disruption. The American school in the southern suburb of Ma'adi was cut off for at least hours, maybe more than a day. That was a short-lived crisis but a crisis nonetheless.

In between all of these crises we had ongoing issues with the Egyptians, one of the most important being their military debt. In the early years of providing military assistance to Egypt we did it by loan rather than grant as we do now. Egypt thus accumulated billions in debt which they had difficulty servicing. It was an issue that had to be managed. It never went away until 1990 when Egypt joined the coalition against Saddam and we forgave the debt. Egyptian economic reform and our AID program were also ongoing issues. Egypt then had the biggest U.S. aid program worldwide. Related issues which took up a lot of our time were Egypt's relations with the IMF and the World Bank

Along with all of the above was the issue of Taba. Taba is a little resort town in the Sinai. When Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1979, Israel agreed to return all the Sinai to Egypt in stages. Israel agreed to return the first half, the half nearest the Suez Canal, in '79, and the second half in 1981. But they did not return Taba and the Israelis came up with some kind of legal argument - it seemed like flim flammery to the rest of us - that Taba really belonged to Israel even though in 1948 or 1967, they made no claim on it.

Q: *Taba was a city, a port city or an area?*

DUNFORD: Taba is on the Red Sea, very close to Eilat and Aqaba.

Q: *Okay.*

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DUNFORD: Israelis were building, in those days, a five star Sonesta hotel. There was also a beach village so Taba was a popular place for Israelis to vacation. I can only speculate on Israeli motives. There were probably some economic interests of people close to the government and the Israelis also saw Taba as an opportunity to demonstrate, to Egypt and to the world, that it was not necessary to give back every inch of territory to satisfy the requirements of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. I also think the Israelis wanted some kind of leverage over Egypt to prevent Egypt from using the bilateral relationship as leverage to get the Israelis to be nicer to the Palestinians. Whatever the motives, Israel claimed Taba and, under the peace treaty, the dispute had to be resolved by conciliation or arbitration. The discussions continued until 1986 when, with our participation, the Egyptians and Israelis agreed to arbitration. The Egyptians would not hear of conciliation and the Israelis wanted conciliation instead of arbitration. The discussions came down to the most miniscule issues concerning how to characterize the location of boundary pillars. The process of how to choose arbitrators was another sticking point. We eventually got the two sides to exchange lists indefinitely until finally the same name showed up on both lists.

Q: And it was through a third country national sort of, not-

DUNFORD: Yes, yes. They were Europeans.

Q: Was the UN involved at all?

DUNFORD: No.

Q: Not at that point, no.

DUNFORD: The Israelis have never been very happy with UN involvement in virtually anything. It was the summer of 1986 when this whole issue came to a head. I can

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remember having to go in to the Department for 17 straight days, including Saturdays and Sundays. Even though my deputy director did most of the work, I had to be there.

Q: Where was the negotiation- where were the negotiations going to take place?

DUNFORD: They took place in Cairo or Jerusalem or Washington or wherever the three sides could get together. There was a lot of input from the State Department lawyers, I remember.

Q: So your time as the director of Egyptian affairs was not a slow time.

DUNFORD: No, it was very active. It was also a very satisfying place to work because of the quality of the people I worked with. Phil Wilcox was director of Israeli affairs. April Glaspie was director of ARN, which was the country desk for Jordan, Syria, Lebanon.

Q: Absolutely; first rate people.

You finished up in Egyptian affairs in '87 and then you went on to senior seminar.

DUNFORD: Yes.

Q: Was that planned or did something-

DUNFORD: I very much wanted it. I turned out to be the most senior person in the senior seminar which was a little embarrassing. I was only about 44 years old but I was an MC and had been one for at least three years.

Q: Okay, okay, so you were an MC and you were then more senior.

DUNFORD: I was an MC and had been a senior officer since 1980. Senior seminar was great. I asked for it and I wanted it BUT I did not get to finish it because I had to go to Riyadh early. I will get to that. But I can remember some great trips; I spent 24 hours on a farm in Minnesota, I spent an evening riding around in a police car in Detroit, and I spent

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another evening riding around in a border patrol vehicle in El Paso. It was a great way to learn about my country and its problems.

Q; Absolutely. It's a shame that they stopped it.

DUNFORD: It is so sad they stopped it.

Q: Less intelligent steps, I think, the Department has taken recently.

DUNFORD: There is a lot of competition.

Q: So you work in a- how- Seldom does anyone leave senior seminar early. What happened?

DUNFORD: I was the only one who left early from my class but I can recall other instances of it happening. I was slated to be DCM in Riyadh and in April of '88 we had what came to be called the Chinese missile crisis. Saudi Arabia secretly purchased and installed Chinese intermediate range ballistic missiles in a location south of Riyadh and we discovered it. Because we discovered it, almost immediately the Israelis discovered it and it became a public issue. Hume Horan was then ambassador in Riyadh. He had only been there maybe nine months. Hume had agreed to take me on as DCM.

Q: To be his DCM.

DUNFORD: Yes. Ned Walker was the guy I replaced. Horan was given very tough instructions to go over to see King Fahd. As a result of his meeting with Fahd, the king decided he no longer wanted to deal with Horan. He had a lot of other issues with Horan. Horan had been deputy chief of mission years earlier when the embassy was in Jeddah. He spoke fluent Arabic; some say better than the king, and I do not think the king liked being shown up. He also met with a lot of figures the king did not think an American ambassador should meet with. So even before the Chinese missile crisis, the king already had a laundry list of complaints. He chose that moment to tell the U.S. Government he

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did not want to deal with Horan any more. He did not formally expel him but made it clear to the U.S. Government that he would no longer be useful in Riyadh. Ned Walker had already departed post, leaving a gap of two or three months in the DCM slot. Ned agreed to come back for two weeks to break me in and introduce me around. I soon found myself in charge of our mission in Saudi Arabia. Leaving early was awkward because our children were in high school, both in their senior year, and about to graduate. I managed to extract a concession from Assistant Secretary Dick Murphy that I could come back for their graduation. That also allowed me to attend the senior seminar graduation which happily was the same week.

I remained in charge for over three months until Walt Cutler returned for a second tour as ambassador. He came out of retirement and had already been confirmed once as ambassador to Riyadh. This either greatly eased or obviated congressional confirmation. I am not sure.

Q: So he was back as charg#.

DUNFORD: No, he returned as ambassador so the Senate must have confirmed him.

Q: Yes, they must have confirmed him. But he-

Q; But anyway, he came back.

Q; It was just a one year thing.

DUNFORD: He returned in August of 1988. I remember being in charge for about three and a half months. The Saudi mission was huge; about 1,500 Americans.

Q: I was just going to ask what is the size of the Saudi mission.

DUNFORD: This was the biggest job I had, including being ambassador to Oman.

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Q; Oh yes, I am sure it was much bigger.

DUNFORD: We had two consulates-general in Jeddah and Dhahran.

Q: *Oh, two. Oh, Dhahran was there.*

DUNFORD: We also had USMTM, the U.S. Military Training Mission, which was our military assistance to the ministry of defense. We also had a separate mission to the Saudi Arabian National Guard.

Q: *You also had a large-*

DUNFORD: We had JECOR (Joint Economic Commission Office in Riyadh) run by the Treasury. I had some early challenges asserting control over both USMTM and JECOR.

Q: *So one does have to remind them.*

DUNFORD: I was a green DCM so the heads of these organizations thought they could ride over me. I had to learn some lessons in a big hurry.

Q: *What about the American oil contingent? Was that large or did-?*

DUNFORD: By then Aramco was Saudi Aramco. There was still a substantial American community. 30,000 Americans, counting families, lived and worked in Saudi Arabia. When the Gulf War came, managing the anxiety of the American community became a major issue for us.

Q: *I can imagine.*

DUNFORD: When Walt Cutler came back in August 1988, the big issues we were dealing with were Lebanon and Afghanistan. On Lebanon, the Taif agreement to end the Lebanese civil war was negotiated in the fall of 1989. Walt had departed for the second

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time at the end of April that year so I was Charg# for the Taif negotiations. Chas. Freeman did not arrive to replace Walt until January of 1990.

Q: What was happening in- Well first of all, the Taif agreement in Lebanon?

DUNFORD: The Saudis brought all the remaining Lebanese who were in the parliament when the civil war broke out to Saudi Arabia and sequestered them in Taif until they were able to reach an agreement. There was not a lot to do in Taifew bars or nightclubs. The Saudis were working with the Algerians and Moroccans in an Arab League committee charged to make this happen. The Saudis were very keen to have the agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council so they kept in close touch with the US, UK and French Embassies, the only permanent representatives of the UNSC with embassies in the Kingdom. I recall having to travel at least three times to Taif in October 1989, along with the British and French Ambassadors, to receive Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud's demarches about what was going on in the negotiations. Prince Saud would brief us on the negotiations and tell us what he wanted our governments to do to support them.

I remember one fun story. Are you good for a fun story?

Q: Oh yes.

DUNFORD: The French ambassador, the first time we went to Taif, told us about this great hotel he remembered staying in years before called the Azizia. So the British ambassador and I booked ourselves rooms in the Azizia but when we got there it was just a pit. It might have been great 20 years earlier but the passing of the years had not been kind. We, the British Ambassador and I, decided to grit our teeth. It would only be for one night. I was shown up to this huge suite with a bare minimum of furniture. The British ambassador stopped by for pre-meeting coordination, he looked around the suite and expressed astonishment. He said his room was like a broom closet in comparison.

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It turned out that his room was actually meant for his driver. Eventually, he got a decent room. We also learned that the French Ambassador, who recommended the Azizia to us, had chosen to stay in Jeddah.

Prince Saud met with us and, as usual, wanted immediate action from our governments. I found myself in Taif with no communications. I opted to phone my notes to Embassy Riyadh where Dick Jones, the new political counselor, was waiting. There were several problems with this. First, the only phone available went through the hotel switchboard so it was hardly secure. I guess this helped the Saudis check to make sure I got the message right. The second problem was that the only phone was on one side of the room and the only light was on the far side of this cavernous room and it was 10:00 at night. I pulled the light as far as its cord would allow and I pulled the phone as far as the cord would take it and I stretched out, prone, on the floor. While talking to Dick Jones, I had to move back and forth from my notes in the light to the phone. At the end I started to giggle but you do what you have to do. .

Q: Well, you also mentioned Afghanistan. What was the mission there?

DUNFORD: Well, you will recall Charlie Wilson's War?

Q: Yes, yes.

DUNFORD: The Saudis provided the financing, we provided the training and equipment and the Pakistanis provided the location. The operation required a lot of consultation with the Saudis. Peter Tomsen was then special ambassador for Afghanistan. Peter is a wonderful man and very capable diplomat but also somewhat disorganized and forgetful which added challenge to managing his visits. He called me one time to tell me that he had a meeting with Saudi Intelligence Chief Prince Turki the next day but had not had time to get a visa. Getting the Saudis to issue a visa on short notice required heavy lifting.

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Q: No, it is a time consuming matter.

DUNFORD: So on that occasion, it took about 24 hours of hell just to get Peter to his meeting. I enjoying the opportunity to accompany him and learn about the politics of the Afghan resistance, to learn about the key leaders like Sayyaf and Hekmatyar and the details of our effort to help the Afghan fundamentalists kick the Soviets out of Afghanistan. Of course, it was a huge example of blowback in the end.

Q: That is right; it was a mixed blessing.

Did the _____ mission change when Chas. Freeman came in?

DUNFORD: Oh yes. Chas. is one of the brightest guys I have ever met. He also has a big ego but we got along pretty well. I enjoyed working for him more than any other boss I have had. He generates so much work that it can be frustrating sometimes but I learned an incredible amount from him. Chas to this day helps me figure out how to think about issues. I read his speeches religiously.

Q: What was Chas's connection to the Middle East at that point, because my knowledge of Chas is within China?

DUNFORD: Chas. had virtually no connection with the Middle East before his assignment to Riyadh.. He learned some Arabic during the long confirmation process.

Q: He is a superb linguist.

DUNFORD: The myth that he spoke fluent Arabic arose from the trip by then Secretary of Defense Cheney to Jeddah in August 1990 after Saddam invaded Kuwait to convince the Saudi king to allow our troops into Saudi Arabia? Chas. is a quick study and by then he no doubt understood enough of the conversation between King Fahd and then Crown Prince Abdullah to figure out what was going on but he was hardly fluent.

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Chas. reminded me a lot of Frank Wisner. One of my biggest challenges when I was running Egyptian affairs was getting Frank ready to go to Cairo as ambassador. Frank like Chas had Jesse Helms problems so he was kicking around Washington for about six months before being confirmed and it was exhausting. Frank would come in every morning with 100 new ideas, 99 of which were terrible but at least one of which was brilliant. But all the ideas had to be dealt with in some way. Some we could reject quickly, but some had to be staffed out until we could talk him out of them. I remember being so glad when he was off to Cairo. Once he was in Cairo, his ideas kept flowing back to Washington so we were not off the hook. Frank is an amazing guy. I will not try to rank Chas. and Frank; both are brilliant. But I worked with Chas. much more intensively. Going through the first Gulf War together really made our relationship close.

Q: That took place while you were there.

DUNFORD: It took place while I was there. In fact, I was Charg# - Chas was on vacation - when Saddam invaded Kuwait.

Q: It seems like everyone was on vacation at that time; April was on vacation.

DUNFORD: April Glaspie was on vacation. However, Nat Howell in Kuwait was not on vacation. This brings up another little story. Arnie Raphel asked me in 1987 if I would be interested in going to Kuwait as ambassador. I said no because I had both of my children going into their last year in high school. Had I ended up going to Kuwait, it could have been me trapped there.

So where was I?

Q: It is the midst of- okay.

DUNFORD: In Riyadh, we anticipated the possibility that Saddam would seize the disputed islands and maybe the border area where the disputed oil field was. I do not think

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anybody predicted before August 2 that he would take all of Kuwait. In retrospect it seems logical because it was really the equivalent of a bank robbery; Saddam needed the money and controlling Kuwait's financial assets and oil production was what he was after. We were fooled by the smoke screen of the territorial issue, the claim that Kuwait is the 19th province of Iraq.

So we were worried about a crisis but I for one did not anticipate how big a crisis it would be. Chas. went off and on August 1 Taha Ramadan, the vice president of Iraq, came to Jeddah to meet with King Fahd the Kuwaiti vice emir. That night, the night of August 1, the Department asked me to find out immediately what happened at that meeting. I called Sheikh Mohammad, personal secretary in the king's office. I only met him in person once but it seemed for a while that we were talking daily or even more frequently. He was fluent in English and flawlessly efficient and reliable. The message I got was not to worry. The dispute was not yet settled but that Iraq and Kuwait would meet again in a couple of days.

Q: So this was not a courtesy briefing of the Saudis that Iraq was planning an invasion.

DUNFORD: No, no. It was a Saudi attempt to mediate the dispute between Kuwait and Iraq and the night before the invasion the Saudis still were upbeat that war could be avoided. After I talked to Sheikh Mohammad, I still had to write up a cable so I did not get home and into bed until well after midnight. It could not have been more than an hour later, the Department called to say that the President wanted to talk to the king and they wanted a phone number. I called Sheikh Mohammad. Calling at 2:00 in the morning was no big deal because the king usually stayed up until about 4:00. I told him the president wanted to call the king, he gave me a number which I relayed to Washington, and I went back to bed. At 4:00 in the morning, Sheikh Mohammad calls, tells me the president has not called yet and the king wants to go to bed. So I called Washington again. By then, Washington had figured out that something was going down and were too busy worrying about that to call the king. I recall maybe another hour of sleep before the Embassy duty officer called to tell me that Iraq had invaded Kuwait. So, I drove back to the embassy.

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The first issue on my plate was how to help Americans trying to flee Kuwait. Most did not have Saudi visas and we had to get the Saudis to allow them across the border. We sent two officers from ConGen Dhahran to facilitate the border crossing.

Q: They decided they were willing to take them in or at least let them cross over?

DUNFORD: Yes, the Saudis agreed to let them cross over. It took a lot of phone calls and considerable effort but there really was no friction about it. Then I recall a lot of back and forth to the Department about what was going on in New York in the UN. Yemen was at the time the Arab representative on the UN Security Council and the Yemenis dragged their feet on sanctioning Iraq. We were asking the Saudis what they could do about the Yemenis. The Saudis were wondering themselves what they could do about the Yemenis so there was a lot of discussion about that. It was a Thursday I recall, usually part of our weekend in Riyadh, but by mid-morning we had everybody not on vacation in the Embassy working. It occurred to me that we were working flat out on what was urgent without giving much thought to what was important. I wandered over to the Economic Section and asked Paul Daley, one of our economic officers, to think about what we as a government needed to think about and do over the next days. He came back to me with a brilliant draft message which I sent in virtually unchanged. He made two key points: first, given the loss of oil production from Kuwait and Iraq, the Saudis, the only ones with the spare capacity, need to double their production. Second, if the sanctions are to work against Iraq, the Saudis need to cut off the pipeline from Iraq through Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea.

Q: They had that capability.

DUNFORD: Turks obviously would have to do the same as the other Iraqi pipeline went through Turkey. Paul concluded that, if the Saudis are going to do stuff like this, which we needed them to do, we need to demonstrate that we will protect them. I do not know whether that message influenced the decision making in Washington or not it was a brilliant piece of work that foreshadowed the strategy we chose.

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Q: And this was a junior officer?

DUNFORD: Well, he was not that junior.

Q: Mid-level.

DUNFORD: Yes, mid-level.

Q: Wow, that is great.

DUNFORD: Over the next four or five days, we were in constant motion preparing for Cheney's visit. I cannot remember the details. I was back and forth to the foreign ministry. I do remember one interesting moment. I was given a message passed through other channels which warned that the Iraqis were massed on the border and could be preparing to come into Saudi Arabia. In retrospect I wonder if that message was not fabricated. Not fabricated but-

Q: Designed to influence the decision.

DUNFORD: Designed to influence the Saudi decision to let us come in.

Q: Were Embassy Kuwait and Embassy Baghdad drawing down or were they sending their people to you at all, along with the citizens coming out of Kuwait?

DUNFORD: Well, the embassy in Kuwait was taken hostage. So there were Americans coming out of Kuwait but not, as far as I remember, official Americans. Americans were trapped in the Embassy Kuwait compound. Iraqis did not go into the compound but they did not let anybody out.

Q: Okay, well, they were there.

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DUNFORD: There was a military attaché, attached to Embassy Kuwait, who set up in a hotel room in Kuwait City and was phoning in real time intelligence about what the Iraqis were doing. His name was Col. Marty Stanton. I met him again in Iraq in April 2003 as he was attached to CFLCC (Coalition Forces Land Component Command).

Back to Saudi Arabia, Chas. cut short his vacation and came back with Defense Secretary Cheney. I did not attend the famous meeting with King Fahd where we persuaded him to accept 150,000 American troops. When I heard what had happened at the meeting, I said to myself: Well, you have always wanted to be in the center of the action; now you've arrived. With 150,000 American troops coming to Saudi Arabia, it was clear that we were going to be the center of action for the foreseeable future. While 150,000 seemed amazing at the time, we ended up with about 500,000 US troops. The two big issues we worried about initially were alcohol (a controlled substance in Saudi Arabia) and women drivers in the U.S military (Saudi women did not and still do not drive). General Schwarzkopf solved the alcohol issue with General Order Number One, which forbid alcohol in the Kuwait Theater of Operations. On women drivers, we worked out a deal with the Saudis that they would be treated as men as long as they wore their chocolate chip (camouflage) uniforms. When they were off duty, military women were counseled to dress in abayas.

Q: I am surprised the Saudis agreed to that.

DUNFORD: Well, they may have come to regret doing so. Remember, in November of 1990, sixty or so Saudi women demonstrated against the driving ban by driving around a shopping mall.

Q: Yes I do.

DUNFORD: The Saudi Government took so much heat from religious conservatives on that issue that they really cracked down hard on those women. The government took away

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their passports, chewed out their husbands, and took away their jobs if they had them. The presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia is really what triggered Osama bin Laden.

Q: Where was he at the time?

DUNFORD: He was back from Afghanistan. The bin Laden family, close to King Fahd and owners of a huge construction company, were very powerful and Osama had not yet been branded a black sheep by the family. I understand that Osama offered the Saudi Government the services of Arab mujahideen (returning fighters experienced in Afghanistan) combating Iraq as an alternative to bringing in the Americans. The royal family decided they were better off with the Americans but it was a difficult decision.

So with Chas. back, the issue that took much of my time was dealing with 30,000 Americans, many of whom were hysterical about the threat of chemical weapons. Press reports suggested that Iraqi scud missiles could be armed with chemical weapons. Americans either wanted gas masks or for the US government to issue what we called a voluntary departure order. Private employers customarily would follow our lead and fund travel home for dependents and non-essential employees.

Q: Yes.

DUNFORD: As the shooting war approached in late 1990, virtually all of our posts in the entire Middle East were under voluntary departure orders.

Q:...Dunford, December 5, 2007. The interview being done by Elisabeth Raspolic.

DUNFORD: I was talking about the fact that virtually every other post in NEA and the Near East bureau, including our Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran, were under a voluntary departure order. Riyadh was the only exception.

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Q: I should point out, voluntary departure pertains to the embassy's and consulate staff, not private American citizens.

DUNFORD: That is right but the private sector looks to the government to trigger their own decisions about whether they pull their employees out. Some companies pulled out right after the announcement of the decision to send U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia. I remember we were somewhat annoyed at that because it sent a bad signal to the Saudi Government. But by the time December rolled around it was clear that this was a war by appointment. There was a UN resolution authorizing use of force and it gave Saddam until January 15 to pull out of Kuwait. So there was little doubt that war was coming. I remember feeling some relief that the situation was coming to a head because I did not figure to get a vacation until the war was over. We were working around the clock for about seven months straight.

The anxiety in the American community continued to build. The Department of State could not make up its minds what to do about either voluntary departure or gas masks. Our position was that we preferred voluntary departure. If the Department continued to resist that decision, then we needed gas masks. I recall a message from Washington in October endorsing that position, telling us that if the situation deteriorates to the point where we need gas masks, then the Department would pull people out. Well, that never happened until the missiles began to fall in Riyadh. We did not get the voluntary departure and we did not get gas masks. We decided to fill the vacuum by organizing a series of briefings in Jeddah, Dhahran and Riyadh for the American community. We pulled together a military team of experts in chemical warfare and missiles and tried to sketch out what the realistic possibilities were. For example, Iraq would not be able to destroy the whole city with one missile tipped with a chemical warhead. If you happened to be outside in the vicinity of such a missile strike, it would likely be lethal. If you were inside a nearby building, chances of survival were pretty good.

Q: I suppose that is small comfort.

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DUNFORD: The narrative is now up to the shooting war. Let me step back a bit. One huge problem we faced as an embassy in the fall of 1990 was the flood of visitors. Riyadh was the center of action so naturally the president came for Thanksgiving, the vice president came for New Year's. The secretary of defense came perhaps eight times. Colin Powell, then chairman of the joint chiefs, also visited several times. Jim Baker, the secretary of state, made at least eight trips but most of these were after the war. Add deputy secretaries, undersecretaries, and virtually every congressman and senator, and we were running a huge visitor's bureau. Chas. was quite acerbic in his messages to the department, saying that Saudi Arabia was being treated like a military theme park. Our message was we had a job to do and please cut back on the visits so we have time to do it. Schwarzkopf picked up on that refrain as well. Of course, we had little success stemming the flow and of necessity we got pretty good at dealing with the constant flow of visitors.

The war started and, predictably, the Iraqis started launching scud missiles both toward Israel and toward Dhahran and Riyadh. One benefit was the reduction in visitors. I remember the first day the missiles came. I was home, it was about nine or ten in the evening and I got a call from the embassy saying four missiles were incoming. We had an early warning system that allowed us about three minutes warning. We had detectors that sent signals back to Cheyenne Mountain, near Colorado Springs, which were relayed back to Riyadh. The duty officer told me I had better come into the Embassy. I said bluntly that was no way I was going anywhere until those suckers hit the ground. We heard the first explosion and my wife Sandy went running to the window. We had briefed everybody in the embassy to stay away from the windows so I just about tackled Sandy to keep her away from the windows. The next morning she talked to her friends in Riyadh. They told her what a wonderful sight it was to watch the scud missiles coming in, the Patriot missiles going up, and the subsequent fireworks. I gave up and we would watch later missiles coming in from our balcony. When the real show was over, we went back inside and watched the replay on CNN.

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Obviously, many Americans were terrified. It is hard, no matter the effort, to get everybody the kind of knowledge they need to deal rationally with a threat like that. We knew that all the scuds were aimed at one of three places: Riyadh air base, King Khalid International Airport and another air base south of Riyadh. Those who lived near the Riyadh air base, which was close to down town, had some issues. We in the diplomatic quarter were far enough from any of the targets that the chances of being struck were remote. That said, there was a stray missile in Dhahran that killed several members of a Pennsylvania National Guard regiment in February near the end of the war.

But here we are in a shooting war with no voluntary departure and no gas masks. Chas. then let fire with a cable, which ought to be one of the classics. The message raked the Department and Washington over the coals for their inaction. He had me send a little follow up cable. It was a very simple cable that provided three lists of posts: a list of posts in NEA on voluntary departure; a list of posts under attack by scud missiles (Tel Aviv Dhahran and Riyadh); and finally a list of posts under attack by scud missiles but without voluntary departure orders (only Riyadh). The dam broke in Washington and we got both our voluntary departure and permission to issue gas masks.

Q: If only you had them.

DUNFORD: Right. So where were the gas masks? I still have, on a shelf in my home office, an example from one of the first shipments of gas masks. It is of World War II vintage, covered with graffiti and with a nonfunctional seal. What we eventually did is borrow a shipment that was destined for the Saudis. I hope we replenished the shipment after the war.

I still remember a message I wrote during that period recapping the sad history of our dialogue with the Department on voluntary departure and gas masks. A key sentence reminded Washington that by the time they ordered us to distribute gas masks, which we didn't have, we had successfully convinced most American citizens that they didn't need

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them. We found ourselves scrambling to get citizens out, sometimes under fire in Dhahran, on military backhaul flights (scheduled airline traffic dried up when the war started) while at the same time fitting those who chose to remain with gas masks. In the end Saddam, of course, did not use chemical weapons.

Q: Was there any evidence of chemical weapons on the missiles coming in, chemical tips?

DUNFORD: No.

Q: No?

DUNFORD: The explanation, in my view, is that Jim Baker, mindful of our failure to dissuade Saddam from invading Kuwait in August 1990, made it clear when he talked to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva just before the war that if Saddam used weapons of mass destruction, we would take Saddam out personally. I think Saddam got the message. Of course, we did take him out personally eventually.

Q: Yes, eventually.

Had the Gulf War finished by the time you finished your assignment?

DUNFORD: Oh yes. The war was essentially over in early March. That did not mean life got back to normal right away.

Q: No. We still had 500,000 Americans.

DUNFORD: But, eventually most went home. We turned our focus to the ambitious Jim Baker initiative to try to restart the peace process which culminated in the Madrid meeting in October '91. Baker made about eight trips to Saudi Arabia. I remember both Cheney and Baker made separate trips to Saudi Arabia while I was charg# so I got to see both in action. My impression of Dick Cheney was that he seemed much more rational compared

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to the picture I have of him today. Jim Baker impressed me as one of the most effective arm twisters I have ever been associated with.

Q: Really?

DUNFORD: I watched him talk Prince Saud into calling the king and getting permission to lift the Arab boycott against Israel. That was pretty impressive.

Q: Yes, yes.

DUNFORD: I was supposed to be reassigned in '91 and the Department called me and offered me ConGen Karachi which just did not attract me at all. I shamelessly begged Chas. to keep me on for another year and it worked out very well for me. While the last year was not quite as exciting as the previous one, there was plenty to do. Collecting \$16.8 billion from the Saudis for our services during the war was a major challenge. I still remember the looks of anguish in the faces of the Central Bank Governor and the Deputy Finance Minister when I pressed them for prompt payment. The other issues we dealt with are a blur.

Q: Well, one thing is you must have been negotiating with the Department about your next assignment.

DUNFORD: It wasn't much of a negotiation. I got a call early in the fall of '91 and was asked whether I preferred Muscat or Abu Dhabi. I said it made no difference to me. I really did not know much about either place. I ended up in Muscat, for which I am terribly grateful.

Q: Well early in the fall would have been when they were putting together the recommendations for the following summer, yes.

DUNFORD: It did not go smoothly.

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Q: *You mean your three years there?*

DUNFORD: No, the-

Q: *Oh, the process.*

DUNFORD: The process of becoming ambassador to Muscat.

Q: *Why?*

DUNFORD: On May 12, 1992, I left Riyadh to go back for my confirmation hearing and the presidential announcement nominating me to Muscat came out on May 15. A day or two later one of my colleagues in Embassy Riyadh wrote an anonymous letter which was deposited on the desk of every member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The letter accused me of multiple counts of waste, fraud and mismanagement.

Q: *No. I have never heard of such a thing.*

DUNFORD: Seven page anonymous letter. I know who wrote it.

Q: *I was going to say, how anonymous was this?*

DUNFORD: I know exactly who wrote it.

Q: *From another agency or from State?*

DUNFORD: Another agency.

Q: *Another agency. I cannot imagine-*

DUNFORD: That other agency is now part of State. I have a pretty good idea what the real grievance was. His wife and my wife had worked together in an Embassy office and did not get along well. We ended up not renewing the appointment of either. The letter

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meant I had to miss the first hearing and defend myself. In this process, you are guilty until proven innocent. Both Chas. and our administrative counselor Mike McLaughlin really stepped up and rode to my rescue. They helped refute every one of the 21 points in the letter. Department was pretty good about it too. The inspector general had already been to Riyadh and inspected a previous complaint and found it meritless so his office was not very enthusiastic about pursuing any of these issues, particularly since the letter was anonymous. So I was delayed but not fatally. Other issues arose to delay confirmation, as is all too common.

Q: Always.

DUNFORD: In August Senator Pressler forced the postponement of a hearing. Four of us were in the hearing room ready to go. President George H. W. Bush had chosen not to nominate someone for judge that Pressler supported so Pressler canceled the hearing. I remember making several trips back out here to Tucson because there was nothing left to do in Washington except wait.

Q: You already had a home here?

DUNFORD: We bought our home in '91 and this was the following year. My children went to the University of Arizona so they lived in our home. We came out here and spent considerable time during the confirmation delay. I believe we drove across the country three times that summer.

I went back to Washington in September. Remember that I left Riyadh in May and it took until late September to finally get a hearing. With me on the panel were Bill Rugh going to Abu Dhabi, John Monjo going to Pakistan and an oil man nominated to be ambassador to Saudi Arabia. It was the end of the Bush Administration and the Democrats anticipated winning the presidential election. Since I had just come from Saudi Arabia, I ended up the fall guy for the senators who wanted to embarrass this Republican nominee. I had to answer several very tricky questions about why Hume Horan was kicked out by the

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Saudis, whether I thought an ambassador should speak the language, and several others designed, in my view, to embarrass the guy sitting next to me. Sarbanes gave me a backhanded compliment, saying in effect that I had managed to stumble through all these questions without giving him anything to work with. He did not say it in exactly those words.

Q: Hearings are strange.

DUNFORD: Time ticked by until late October and Congress was winding up its session. There was a serious threat that they would not act on any further nominations until the following year. Happily, my nomination along with several others was approved at 11:00 in the evening on the last day of the session. By then we were mentally preparing to go back yet again to Tucson.

Q: Yes because it is also very expensive to sit around in Washington until the per diem kicks in.

DUNFORD: Yes, absolutely.

Q: So off you went.

DUNFORD: Off I went to Muscat. I was eager, as you can imagine. I arrived in Muscat on either the same day or the day after my predecessor left. This is almost unheard of.

Q: Yes, it is.

DUNFORD: Liz McKune my DCM was already there. Muscat was more low- key than Saudi Arabia but still it proved to be a very interesting three years. During my three years, U.S. Government decided to end an economic assistance program that had been operating since about 1980. In many ways Oman had outgrown the need for a U.S. assistance program so there was some logic. The problem for me was the way it was done. Ending the program was a USAID initiative. I never got the sense that the

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Department or the U.S. Government as a whole focused on the fact that the economic assistance program was a quid pro quo for a military base access agreement.

Q: Oh my lord. They forgot about it?

DUNFORD: They seemed not to take it into account.

Q: Yes, yes.

DUNFORD: We had, in Oman while I was there, an agreement which allowed us to preposition Air Force equipment at three of their air bases: at Seeb near Muscat; Masirah, a little island off the coast, and Thumrait in the southern part of Oman. The Omanis were not amused. We compounded the problem by giving them the news on a Friday, the Muslim Sabbath and the one day everybody stays out of the office. I got about two hours' notice before the press conference by the AID administrator in DC. Oman was just one of a number of countries that they decided to cut from the rolls. So, my job was to call the foreign minister on a Friday and tell him that his \$20 million a year aid program was out the window.

Furthermore, the new AID Administrator, Brian Atwood, was also hell bent to squeeze more savings out of the existing AID program. You know how AID works, they obligate money to various projects but the money may not be disbursed until much later. .

Q: That is right; years later.

DUNFORD: USAID proposed to rescind some of the money obligated but not yet spent on projects in Oman. They call these rescissions. So, in addition to telling the Omanis that they no longer would get new economic assistance, I had to explain about upcoming rescissions. They were understandably thunderstruck to learn that money promised to them would be taken away. In the initial stages, I had no talking points to deal with the relationship between economic assistance and base access even though the Omanis

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understood this relationship clearly. I was able to manage this issue, albeit with some difficulty, because I had a very good relationship with the Omani Government, particularly the sultan and the foreign minister; a very crusty but very straightforward guy, Yousef bin Alawi.

Q: Did you have a staff that you needed in Oman or were you overstaffed, understaffed?

DUNFORD: I thought our staffing was about right. We had a DCM; we had a political officer; an economic officer, a consular officer...

Q: Public affairs?

DUNFORD: And a public affairs officer. We had a small AID mission which was there through my time because they had to still clean up the program. We had defense attaches, a military assistance group and we had an Air Force team that looked after the prepositioned equipment. All in all, the Embassy had 50 to 70 Americans. I do not recall that we had anybody sitting around doing nothing.

The other main issue which came out much better for us was a peace process issue. The Madrid conference in 1991 set off a multilateral track, as well as a bilateral track. On the multilateral track there was a Water Resources working group which the U.S. chaired. During a meeting of the working group in Beijing there was a proposal that the next meeting be hosted by the Omanis. The Omanis were quite anxious about taking this on. I remember some late night phone calls to the foreign minister but we persuaded the Omanis to host the next meeting. That led to official Israelis coming to the Arabian Peninsula for the first time in modern history and that was very exciting for the Israelis. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin led the delegation.

Q: Did the Omanis take much flak from their neighboring Arab countries?

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DUNFORD: Some, but the Omanis are willing to put up with a certain amount of flak. Their most important foreign policy principle is to get along with everybody. An interesting thing about being ambassador in Oman in the early 1990s is that there was also an ambassador from Tehran and an ambassador from Baghdad. I was not allowed to engage in substantive conversations with them, I would see them everywhere and do my best to be polite.

Q: Sure.

DUNFORD: The Israeli delegation thing was a big deal. The Israelis were excited to come as was the Israeli press that accompanied the delegation. They interviewed me and were so excited about the prospects for the future. Of course, the future did not work out. Then Israeli Prime Minister Rabin came a few months later afterwards and visited the sultan. That breakthrough turned out to be the key to getting us past the aid shutdown crisis. The final step was getting Al Gore, then vice president, to come to Muscat with a pledge to contribute three million U.S. dollars to a Middle East desalination research center to be located in Muscat. It remains in operation, one of the few things left over from the Oslo process that still works.

Q: How interesting.

DUNFORD: The Gore meeting was both the high point and low point of my tour because he got off the plane visibly angry. Rumor has it that the aircraft toilet did not work and it was clear his wife Tipper was not happy. Tipper did not have a great day in Oman. All sorts of events were planned for her and she made it clear that she did not want any part of any of it. My wife Sandy had to apologize for her.

Q: How long were the Gores in Oman?

DUNFORD: About four hours and 45 minutes.

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Q: I see, okay. I thought it was two or three days.

DUNFORD: No, just a few hours.

Q: Well that is unfortunate.

DUNFORD: Yes, they left Amman in the morning and were due in Saudi Arabia in the evening so it was a tough day for them.

Q: You spent three years-

DUNFORD: I voted for Gore anyway.

Q: That is alright. We are all entitled to a bad day.

You were in Oman for three years?

DUNFORD: A few months short of three years.

Q: Then what happened?

DUNFORD: I retired.

Q: Yes but why was that?

DUNFORD: I was retired. I had been a senior officer for 14 years and that is all you get unless you get promoted to career minister.

Q: Career minister?

DUNFORD: Yes, career minister and then career ambassador. Perhaps one person a year gets promoted to career minister.

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Q: *Exactly.*

DUNFORD: So I was told I had to retire.

Q: Yes.

DUNFORD: I left Oman in June 1995 so I could do the retirement seminar. I could have stayed until November '05

Q: *Not '05; '95.*

DUNFORD: Ninety-five, sorry. I have been back to work with the Department a couple of times.

Q: *I know that you have already been interviewed, I believe, for the time that you have spent in Iraq on the transition team or whatever.*

DUNFORD: Yes, the U.S. Institute of Peace took an oral history.

Q: Yes.

So you came out here and sort of hustled the university or you had connections with the university, other than the fact that your children had attended?

DUNFORD: My children had come here beginning in 1990 to attend the University of Arizona. We came out to visit them in '91 and we did not like sleeping on their floor. Actually, it was one unit of a duplex that we had bought years earlier as an investment. That led us to buy a house and it is the one we still live in. We did not expect to live in it but we got used to it and it works.

Once we bought the house, I pretty much knew I was going to retire in Tucson. I did not immediately focus on the fact that I was going to retire in '95; I think it was '94 when I

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began to focus on it. I was only 52 when I retired, but that is the price you pay for early success, I guess.

Q: Yes, the personnel system-

DUNFORD: During the years I was in Oman, I spent a lot of time during summer visits to Tucson cultivating people at the University of Arizona. I became good friends with Jerry Green who was then director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. In 1995, I managed to persuade the president of the University of Arizona, Manuel Pacheco, to visit Oman. We were able to come up with a list of about 100 Omanis who had attended U of A.

Q: Really?

DUNFORD: And we got about 70 of them out to meet him.

Q: Well fantastic.

DUNFORD: I think he was pretty impressed. So, I had quite a few contacts when I came back. I started out teaching briefly at Pima Community College and the University of Phoenix until they offered me a job as adjunct here at the university. Jerry Green had gone to the Rand Corporation but his successor managed to cobble together some grant money and get me started teaching. I think I have taught at least one semester a year every year since.

Q: I bet from time to time you go off as a WAE for the Department?

DUNFORD: Yes. I went to Cairo to try to put together MENABANK, officially the Bank for Economic Cooperation and Development in the Middle East and North Africa. It is to be a regional multilateral development bank along the lines of the Inter-American Development Bank,

Q: Oh, I see.

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DUNFORD: Or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development,

Q: Or the African Development Bank, yes.

DUNFORD: The Middle East has never had such an institution because of the politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The breakthrough in Oslo in the early '90s created the opportunity to set up such a bank. The U.S., as it is in other regional multilateral developments banks, was to be the major shareholder. Several Europeans, the Japanese, and the Canadians signed up. In the region we had Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. My job was to run what we called the transition team; as the biggest shareholder the U.S. representative got to run the operation. We set up in Cairo and there were eight of us, including an Israeli, an Egyptian and a Jordanian (of Palestinian origin). The Dutch, Canadians, Japanese, and Italians were also represented. We did about a year and a half's worth of really good work but the politics just were not right. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak did not want to do anything to help Israel because at that time Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was expanding settlements. Netanyahu had no interest in the bank; it was essentially an initiative of his rival Shimon Peres. The US Congress did not want to fund it because it perceived that it was equivalent to adding to the already huge aid budgets for Egypt and Israel. Congress demanded that any US contribution to the bank be deducted from our aid to Egypt and Israel. Neither the Egyptians nor the Israelis were prepared to support that.

Q: Yes.

DUNFORD: Our work finally ground to a halt and we put the whole projects on blocks. I enjoyed living in Cairo for the second time and the whole experience was a good one for me. I have in retirement become the master of hopeless projects. The next such project was Iraq ...

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Q: I heard you speak a couple of years ago to a Foreign Service retirees group about your time advising at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or at least trying to put it back together again, which was-

DUNFORD: Oh yes, we did.

Q: Yes, yes.

DUNFORD: It is hard to create an effective foreign ministry though when you have a dysfunctional government.

Q: Well and obviously in a foreign ministry not all your people are there in one location; they are all over the world. So I do recall your talking about having set up Hotmail accounts for them to- for you to send out directives. Or not you but the ministry to send out directives.

DUNFORD: It was amazing. We just created a Hotmail account called Iraqmfa@hotmail.com. We put together a communications network including over 50 overseas posts using that Hotmail account.

Q: I think the Department of State should look at that.

DUNFORD: We paid no attention whatsoever to classification; there just did not seem any point.

Q: Yes, yes.

Have you- do you have plans to go back or at this point-

DUNFORD: I do not have any specific plans. I have been working the military briefing circuit pretty hard since the summer of '04, working with military units about to go to Iraq

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or Afghanistan. I have traveled to Korea, to Germany three times and to various military bases around the US. That, plus teaching, has kept me busy.

Q: *Good.*

Well, is there anything you feel we have not touched on?

DUNFORD: I am sure there are many things we have not touched on.

Q: *But that you would like to have immortalized, let us put it that way.*

DUNFORD: Nothing leaps to mind.

Q: *Okay, then I thank you very much for your time and effort and for contributing to this project.*

DUNFORD: My pleasure.

End of interview